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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/565,475	01/20/2006	Horst-Werner Maier-Hunke	407-381	9903
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Mark P. Stone Attorney at Law 50 Broadway Hawthorne, NY 10532			EXAMINER HANSEN, JAMES ORVILLE	
			ART UNIT 3637	PAPER NUMBER
			MAIL DATE 07/21/2010	DELIVERY MODE PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/565,475

Applicant(s)

MAIER-HUNKE, HORST-WERNER

Examiner

James O. Hansen

Art Unit

3637

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 06 May 2010.
2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1,2 and 4-22 is/are pending in the application.
4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
6) ☒ Claim(s) 1,2 and 4-21 is/are rejected.
7) ☒ Claim(s) 22 is/are objected to.
8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/GS/US)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____

- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

1. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

2. Claims 1, 2, 4, 5, 8, 10-16 & 18-21 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Manzardo [US Patent 3,070,235]. Manzardo (figures 1-27, but specifically figures 18-20) teaches of a key box (fig. 18) having a door (110) and a housing (housing as shown in fig. 18) which can be closed by the door, in which the rear wall (defined by 107's) of the housing is provided with means (32) for hanging keys supported directly by the rear wall, characterized in that side walls (101, 102) and the door of the housing comprises cut-to-length continuous profiles which, in the region of their edges facing away from the door, have vertically running guide grooves (105 for example – also, see fig. 19) for receiving the rear wall, and in that the side walls are attached to a bottom part (103) forming the floor of the box and a top part (104) forming the roof of the box. Manzardo teaches applicant's inventive claimed key box as disclosed above, but does not specifically state that the housing [for the embodiment in figs. 18-20] is made of metal or plastic [Manzardo states "wood" for this embodiment, but does note in the other embodiments that the housing can be made of sheet metal or other material (see col. 2)].

As to the employed material, the position is taken that it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to

utilize a varying array of known materials for the manufacture of the housing depending upon the personal preferences of the designer and/or the designated environment for the finished product since it has been held to be within the general skill of a worker in the art to select a known material on the basis of it's suitability for the intended use as a matter of obvious design choice. *Sinclair & Carroll Co. v. Interchemical Corp.*, 325 U.S. 327, 65 USPQ 297 (1945); and *In re Leshin*, 227 F.2d 197, 125 USPQ 416 (CCPA 1960).

As to the material being "extruded", the position is taken that the method of forming the device is not germane to the issue of patentability of the device itself, and therefore, the limitation has not been given patentable weight.

As to claim 2, the side walls are configured as solid profiles and do not have a hollow portion; however, the position is taken that it would have been an obvious matter of personal preference to vary the shape, profile or size of an element depending upon the needs and/or preferences of the user, since such a modification would have involved a mere change in the configuration of a component. A change of this degree is generally recognized as being within the level of ordinary skill in the art. In *re Dailey*, 357 F.2d 669, 149 USPQ 47 (CCPA 1966) (The court held that the configuration of the claimed disposable plastic nursing container was a matter of choice which a person of ordinary skill in the art would have found obvious absent persuasive evidence that the particular configuration of the claimed container was significant). Additionally, the Federal Circuit has held that, where the only difference between the prior art and the claims was a recitation of relative dimensions of the claimed device and a device having

the claimed relative dimensions would not perform differently than the prior art device, the claimed device was not patentably distinct from the prior art device. *Gardner v. TEC Systems, Inc.*, 725 F.2d 1338, 220 USPQ 777 (Fed. Cir. 1984), cert. denied, 469 U.S. 830, 225 USPQ 232 (1984).

As to claim 4, Manzardo teaches the side walls and door as being made of wood profiles, but not extruded aluminum; however, the claimed feature is deemed obvious in view of the previously cited rational.

As to claim 5, Manzardo teaches the top and bottom parts as being made of wood parts, but not plastic molded parts; however, the claimed feature is deemed obvious in view of the previously cited rational.

As to claim 8, the side walls have flanges (viewed as the end flange behind the groove on each wall – fig. 19) forming parts of the wall.

As to claim 10, the means for hanging keys are formed by a key rail (32) which can be hung in an elongated perforation or groove (109) in the real wall.

As to claim 11, the top and bottom parts are similarly configured.

As to claim 12, the side walls are similarly configured.

As to claims 13-16 & 18-20, these limitations/features have been addressed previously within the body of the rejection.

As to new claim 21, Manzardo teaches of a key box (fig. 18) having a door (110) and a housing (housing) which can be closed by the door, the housing comprising a rear wall (defined by 107's) and side walls (101, 102), the rear wall of the housing being provided with means for hanging keys (32), with the means for hanging keys being

fixedly mounted to the rear wall in the assembled operating configuration of the box and being removable from the rear wall if so desired by the user, wherein the side walls and the door comprise cut-to-length continuous profiles which, in the region of the edges of the side walls facing away from the door, have vertically running guide grooves (105's) for receiving webs (viewed as the lateral distal ends of the 107's – so far as broadly claimed) of the rear wall, the guide grooves being engaged behind the webs (fig. 19), the side walls being attached to a bottom part (103) forming a floor of the box and a top part (104) forming a roof of the box.

Manzardo teaches applicant's inventive claimed key box as disclosed above, but does not specifically state that the housing [for the embodiment in figs. 18-20] is made of metal or plastic [Manzardo states "wood" for this embodiment, but does note in the other embodiments that the housing can be made of sheet metal or other material (see col. 2)]. As such, the position is taken that it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to utilize a varying array of known materials for the manufacture of the housing depending upon the personal preferences of the designer and/or the designated environment for the finished product since it has been held to be within the general skill of a worker in the art to select a known material on the basis of it's suitability for the intended use as a matter of obvious design choice. *Sinclair & Carroll Co. v. Interchemical Corp.*, 325 U.S. 327, 65 USPQ 297 (1945); and *In re Leshin*, 227 F.2d 197, 125 USPQ 416 (CCPA 1960).

3. Claims 6, 7, 9 & 17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Manzardo in view of Chuan [US Patent 5,451,102] and Garton et al., [US Patent

5,076,454]. Manzardo (figures 1-27, but specifically figures 18-20) teaches of a key box (fig. 18) having a door (110) and a housing (housing as shown in fig. 18) which can be closed by the door, in which a continuous rear wall of the housing comprises a plurality of segments (107's) disposed one above the other and is provided with means (32) for hanging keys supported directly by the rear wall, with the plurality of segments having substantially planar top and bottom edges (see fig. 18) for forming the continuous rear wall (one continuous rear wall structure is formed when the segments are stacked together), characterized in that side walls (101, 102) and the door of the housing comprises cut-to-length continuous profiles which, in the region of their edges facing away from the door, have vertically running guide grooves (105 for example – also, see fig. 19) for receiving the rear wall, and in that the side walls are attached to a bottom part (103) forming the floor of the box and a top part (104) forming the roof of the box. Manzardo teaches applicant's inventive claimed key box as disclosed above, but does not specifically state that the housing [for the embodiment in figs. 18-20] is made of metal or plastic [Manzardo states "wood" for this embodiment, but does note in the other embodiments that the housing can be made of sheet metal or other material (see col. 2)]; does not show the top and bottom parts being provided with lugs which jut into cavities in the side walls; and does not show the segments as having studs and recesses on upper and lower edges of the segments in order to join the segments together.

As to the employed material, the position is taken that it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to

utilize a varying array of known materials for the manufacture of the housing depending upon the personal preferences of the designer and/or the designated environment for the finished product since it has been held to be within the general skill of a worker in the art to select a known material on the basis of it's suitability for the intended use as a matter of obvious design choice. *Sinclair & Carroll Co. v. Interchemical Corp.*, 325 U.S. 327, 65 USPQ 297 (1945); and *In re Leshin*, 227 F.2d 197, 125 USPQ 416 (CCPA 1960).

As to the lug and cavity connection, Chuan (figures 1-6) is cited as an evidence reference to show that it was known in the furniture art to utilize guide lugs (6) with top and bottom parts (2) in order to connect with cavities (32/33) in side walls (3) so that an assembled cabinet can be constructed. Accordingly, the position is taken that it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the cabinet of the prior art by incorporating the connection system as taught by Chuan because this arrangement would allow the cabinet of Manzardo to be assembled and disassembled in an easy manner [abstract of Chuan].

As to the segments having studs and recesses, Garton et al., (figures 1-21) is cited as an evidence reference to show that it was known in the knockdown art to utilize segmented panels (24a, 24b) having studs (can be viewed as either the structure labeled as (56) or element (58)) and recesses (can be viewed as either the structure labeled as (34) or element (64) forming the groove) [56 mates with 34, while 58 mates with the groove of 64] on opposite edges of the segments. Accordingly, the position is taken that it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time

the invention was made to modify the cabinet of the prior art by incorporating the segment connection means as taught by Garton because this arrangement would securely lock the segments together thereby increasing the rigidity of the rear wall, yet still allow the slots to remain (note fig. 9 of Garton) for retaining the suspension elements of Manzardo.

As to claim 7, the material of the segments appears to be wood, not plastic molded parts; however, the claimed feature is deemed obvious in view of the previously cited rational.

As to claims 9 & 17, the side walls have flanges (viewed as the flanged portion along the rear distal end of each side located rearward of the rear wall – fig. 19) and these flanges act as a guide for the segments.

Allowable Subject Matter

4. Pending further review and consideration, Claim 22 is objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, and may be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Response to Arguments

5. Applicant's arguments filed December 17, 2009 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive. The position is taken that all the claimed limitations have been adequately addressed within the body of the rejections. In response to applicant's remarks that 112(6th) is invoked concerning the "means for hanging keys" limitation, the examiner is aware of such notification and responds in part by noting that the prior art

structure teaches of an equivalent structure as outlined in the Office action. The disclosure upon which applicant relies upon merely recites “key rails” (25) as the limitation in question coupled with plural rows of rectangular “perforations” (24) which can be used to hang the rails [not positively associating the components, just the potential to]. As such, the examiner has pointed out that the means for hanging keys (32) can be used with perforations (elongated rectangular slots) in the rear wall in a manner similar to and for the same purpose (hanging keys) as applicant’s structure.

Conclusion

6. **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL.** Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to James O. Hansen whose telephone number is 571-272-6866. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday between 8-4:30 pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Darnell Jayne can be reached on 571-272-7723. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/James O. Hansen/
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 3637

JOH
July 19, 2010